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July 1, 2018

Thousands Rally Across the Southeast for Immigrant Rights

Across the Southeast, thousands of people took to the streets on Saturday, June 30 demanding change and that children separated from their families be reunited at once. “Families Belong Together” rallies were held in cities large and small, from Atlanta, Nashville, and Birmingham to Charleston SC, Greenville SC, Cookeville TN, and Mobile AL. As indicated by the photos below, many of our UCC congregations were well represented at these events.

As Conference Minister Marie Bacchiocchi writes, “If you are like me, the images and sounds on television breaks your heart. I know that immigration policies are complex and never perfect, but it is hard not to see these images and hear the children crying and not have your heart break.

“As a granddaughter of four Italian immigrants, I have watched in horror as our country goes back on its word to be a beacon of hope for new beginnings in this world. As a Christian, I am appalled at how Christianity is being warped to defend the enacting of a policy to the letter of the law while ignoring Jesus’ call to love your neighbor as yourself.

“We can disagree on politics. But I believe that these actions are a slippery slope. I encourage you to do something. Write or call your congress people, sign a petition, send money or supplies to a group that is helping the parents and the children, be part of a protest. Put your faith into action. That is how we as people of faith respond when the world is swirling out of

control. This is a time when I believe that our faith demands that our voices be heard."

View more photos on our website.

Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2018. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers. Click here to download the entire 2018 prayer list.

Week of July 2

- Evergreen Congregational UCC; Beachton, Georgia
- Leslie Brogan
- Sam Greening
- Shannon Michael Pater

- John Pearson
- Matt Laney

Week of July 9

- Brookemeade Congregational UCC; Nashville, Tennessee
- Marie Bacchiocchi
- Paul Hackett
- Michael Piazza
- David Templeton Jr

Churches in Transition

Garden of Grace, Columbia, SC; Emmanuel, Greenville, SC; First Congregational, Birmingham, AL; Pilgrimage, Marietta, GA; Sandy Creek, Lafayette, AL; Church of the Savior, Alpharetta, GA

News from the Wider Church

National Youth Event (NYE) 2020

Save the Date!! July 22-25, 2020 at Purdue University. The theme of NYE2020 is, "Unite!" The Youth Leadership Committee will be asking for youth to self-nominate to serve on a programmatic planning team for NYE2020. They already have a website. Please consider asking a youth member of your congregation to be part of the planning team for an event that changes many lives. If you have any questions, please contact Marie.

Churches Hit by New Tax Law

UCC General Counsel, Heather Kimmel, has received word that because of the tax law changes of 2017, churches with parking lots may need to file an extra form to the IRS this year. Their recent tax-code rewrite requires churches, hospitals, colleges, orchestras and other historically tax-exempt organizations to begin paying a 21 percent tax on some types of fringe benefits they provide their employees. The main benefits affected are transportation-related, like free parking in a lot or a garage and subway and bus passes. It also targets meals provided to workers and, in some circumstances, may affect gym memberships. Learn more on our website.

Training and Learning Opportunities

PATHWAYS Lowers Tuition Rates

Given the rising cost associated with higher learning and steady increase in tuition rates, PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc, has made the bold decision to lower tuition rates. The goal of this move is to better assure that the cost of progressive Christian theological education remains within reach for those interested in online studies.

Beginning July 1, 2018, tuition for PATHWAYS courses is as follows:

- Four-Week Explorer courses remain $99 (or $129 for authorized ministers seeking CEU's)
- Six-Week courses -- $295 per course
- Nine-Week Supervised Ministry -- $295 per course
- Twelve-Week Polity course -- $295 per course

Participants from UCC Conferences or judicatory affiliates from other denominations receive a $50 per course tuition reduction.

PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc., is a progressive Christian learning community seeking to empower transformative leadership for justice and peace within and beyond the church by engaging heart and mind to consider what it means to know, love and serve God in today's changing world. For more information, visit: www.PATHWAYS-UCC.org.

8th Annual Retired Servants Retreat

An Event for intellectual stimulation; spiritual enlightenment and reflection; and renewing friendships and/or making new friends for Retired UCC Clergy, Missionaries, Volunteer Ministry Workers and Spouses of the Southeast and Southern Conferences of the United Church of Christ.

This year's theme is "White Privilege."
Our guest speaker is Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President of UCC.

The retreat will be held Monday -Wednesday, October 1-3, 2018 at Blowing Rock Conference Center in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Learn more about the event on our website.

UCCMA Church Music Workshop in Atlanta, GA

You're invited to a daylong event for music directors, choir members, instrumentalists, ministers, worship committee members, seminary and college students to improve skills, find inspiration and network with colleagues. It will be held on Saturday, August 25, 2018 from 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM at Virginia-Highland Church. Learn more on our website.

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